Title:
Using Service Learning to Increase Depression Awareness on College Campuses

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Session Title:
Service Learning in Nursing Education
Slot:
H 01: Saturday, 29 July 2017: 8:30 AM-9:15 AM
Scheduled Time:
8:30 AM

Keywords:
depression, nursing education and service learning

References:


Abstract Summary:
This presentation will identify ways nursing faculty can increase depression awareness through a service learning project as well as potential challenges and opportunities for nursing students and stakeholders.

Learning Activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The learner will be able to list challenges and opportunities in implementing a depression service learning project with nursing students.</td>
<td>Challenges encountered when implementing a depression service learning project will be discussed. Anecdotal examples will be provided. A) Integration with course and stakeholders B) Lack of predictability C) Student apathy Opportunities in implementing a depression service learning project will be explored from the stakeholder perspective. A) Increased student empathy B) Community satisfaction C) Student personal growth</td>
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<td>The learner will be able to identify key stakeholders involved in developing a college based service learning project.</td>
<td>The following key stakeholders involved in a college based depression service learning project will be discussed as well as their impact on the success of implementing the project: A) Nursing students B) College student body C) Faculty D) College</td>
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Abstract Text:

There are an increasing number of college students experiencing depression. Approximately 41% of the students seen in college counseling centers self-report depression while almost 33% of college students reported having suicidal thoughts (Reitz et al., 2015). Though these statistics are alarming, depression awareness is not routinely addressed on college campuses. Service learning projects for nursing students may help meet this growing need.

In their professional role, nurses commonly discuss depression with patients and communities yet student nurses’ teaching skills are limited. Service learning brings real world learning to students, enhances student engagement and can also add an invaluable benefit to the college community. Peer teaching has been found useful in undergraduate nursing education to develop skills and self-confidence (McKenna & French, 2011). Student nurses, who possess limited skills teaching a variety of populations, can help educate patients and college communities about depression.

Purpose: The purpose of this presentation is to discuss the benefits and challenges of using service learning as a teaching project to increase depression awareness on a college campus.

Methods: Over six weeks, traditional students enrolled in an undergraduate psychiatric nursing course participated in a service learning project as part of their course curriculum. National Depression Screening Day, a national initiative, was used to bring education and awareness to student depression. Prior to the project, students wrote a pre-reflection describing their unique perspective of service learning, depression and civic duty to their college community. Students explored the details of implementing the project and identified target specific audiences that may experience depression: freshman, minorities, transfer and LGBTQ students. To enhance their knowledge base as “consultants” for depression, psychiatric nursing students attended lectures conducted by both the experts as well as those who live with severe depression. The day of the service learning project, students provided handouts, posters and personal dialogued to college students to engage them in doing the screening. The screening was completed online anonymously through the school’s counseling center. Students were given the opportunity to have the results sent to their email or make an appointment for further treatment.

Results: The counseling center reported a substantial increase in completion of the online depression screening as a result of the service learning activity. End of course evaluations and reflection journaling indicated the service learning activity had a positive impact on the nursing students: it increased their empathy towards mental illness; helped improve their psychiatric assessment skills; and fostered a positive civic attitude.

Conclusions: Nursing students are in the unique position to make a significant impact on the mental health of their peers and increase their professional growth through service learning activities.